

AN
E S S A Y
ON THE
PRINCIPLES AND MANNERS
OF THE
MEDICAL PROFESSION.

WITH
SOME OCCASIONAL REMARKS
ON THE
USE AND ABUSE OF MEDICINE.

By J. WHITAKER NEWMAN,
Member of the Corporation of Surgeons, London.

*Ubi verò, animus ex multis periculis atque miseriis requievit, non
fuit consilium socordiâ atque desidîâ bonum otium conterere; ne
vitam silentio transeam sicut pecora, quæ natura prona atque
ventri obedientia finxit. c SALLUSTIO.*

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TO
ARTHUR NEWMAN, Esq.
OF
RINGWOOD,

In the County of SOUTHAMPTON.

DEAR SIR,

I HOPE not to incur the suspicion of interested flattery, in making those acknowledgements which gratitude and justice demand.

The warmth of expression and lively sentiments, which, in general addresses of this kind, degenerate into fulsome adulation, have been thought necessary and decent, when considered as the efforts of filial duty and affection.

If I have enjoyed or profited, from any opportunities which my education afforded, either before or after I turned my mind to medical pursuits, it is to your tender assiduity, and anxious endeavours that I owe the advantages of them.

It is you, Sir, I am to thank, for being in the early part of life an eye-witness to the manual dexterity of a Ranby, the philosophic genius and erudition of a Monsey, and the elegant accomplishments of an Adair.

And while I contemplate the exertions of Dr. Hunter, whose merit is as unequalled as his loss will be irreparable, I feel my obligations to you increase, for placing me within the happy influence of his peculiar talents for instruction.

Nor am I less ready to attribute my most fatal errors to neglecting, than I am willing to impute, the most fortunate events of my life, to following the advice and suggestions of parents, whom it has been and still is my happiness to venerate and love.

Under the glowing impulse of such convictions, which I am neither able or willing to resist, it would betray a defect both of the head and heart, not to testify on all occasions, that I am by nature and reason,

Dear Sir,

Your obedient

and devoted

humble servant,

J. WHITAKER NEWMAN.

P R E F A C E.

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P R E F A C E.

*T*O defend an extensive Society of men from undeserved reproach, to point out some faults, by way of caution to those who are entering into life, and to inculcate the necessity of liberal behaviour, is the business of this Essay.

Vulgar prejudices, and senseless bigotry, have been, and still are, inveterate enemies to rational improvement in every branch of science.

He who combats such formidable monsters with success, deserves our praise, and an ineffectual effort, perhaps, will not be despised.

As publications on every subject, abound so much, the presenting one

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to the public eye, that lays claim to no extraordinary merit, but the negative one, of being without falsehood or absurdity, seems to require some apology.

To fill up the intervals of a recovery from a dangerous illness, and to divert the attention from brooding on some domestic calamities, is a reason, but not an excuse for this attempt.

A N
E S S A Y, &c.

CHAPTER THE FIRST.

Introduction.—The Incitements and Discouragements of Practitioners mentioned.—A Declaration of Men of Eminence—That the Practice of Medicine is degenerated—That the Behaviour of the World has rendered it necessary.—Some Objections against Medical Men spoken of.—No general Rule without an Exception.

TO alleviate the sorrows of the distressed, and to be instrumental in restoring health and spirits to the infirm and dejected, are pursuits which a liberal mind must engage in, with a sincere and rational delight.

Nor is such an employment without circumstances, which render it a probable source of mutual benevolence and gratitude.

A husband, or a father, restored to the arms of a despairing wife and children ; and the grateful voice of a patient, snatched from the jaws of death, and pressing the hand of his benefactor to a glowing bosom, is certainly a refined pleasure, and one of as exalted and exquisite a nature as it has pleased our bountiful Creator to render the human mind capable of enjoying.

So alluring and so flattering does the prospect appear to the eye of a superficial observer ; that we ought rather to lament than be surprized at the vast numbers of infatuated parents, who so indiscriminately, not to say cruelly, sacrifice their devoted children, to the attractions, and too often, to the wretchedness of a medical life.

But the experienced practitioner, whose life and habits have led him to a more intimate acquaintance with men and things, has been heard to lament with a sigh, that this enjoyment has its alloy, of neglect, ingratitude, and reproach.

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He has found his best efforts for the welfare of mankind, resisted and traduced by folly, detraction, and obstinacy; while his anxious attendance on the sick, and his mode of treatment, have been imputed solely to motives, as dishonourable and mean as the souls of those who suggested them.

In the place of implicit confidence, he has met with suspicion, and the soul-soothing language of lively gratitude, has given way to cold formality, perhaps to keen invective: his attendance and medicines have been either ridiculed or disregarded, and their good effects not unfrequently attributed to the preposterous exhibitions of an ignorant, but bold empiric.—If his attempts for the recovery of his patient should not be attended with success, that constant companion (in the world's eye) to real merit, his fame will be blasted by the malignant breath of envy, his reputation be sacrificed by scandal and malice at the altar of private resentment, and his mangled name be offered up to appease the injured manes of a slaughtered friend.

While his calamities are regarded as the avenging hand of Heaven punishing his misdeeds, his prosperity will be considered as

built on the ghastly ruins of mankind, and any eminence he may attain to in his profession, as an ingenious method of torturing the groans, the diseases, and the misfortunes of his fellow-creatures, to the base purposes of avarice and sordid lucre.

He will be accused, of never feeling the soft luxury of a tear, of being callous to those social and endearing ties which bind man to man, and (absorbed in the idea of a fee) of losing all relish for that noblest that best of all fees, the pleasure which results from reflecting on a virtuous and benevolent action.

That such has been and still is the general complaint of those, whose opportunities, application, or abilities, have not been able to procure them rank and emolument, is an acknowledged truth.

But equally true it is, that men at this time in the British metropolis, ornaments at once to the profession and the age in which they live, have declared that they studied physic, and entered on the practice of it, on the broad, liberal, and comprehensive basis, of honour, of generosity, and humanity.

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The task of relating their declaration, would have been a pleasing one, had it gone no farther ; but they added with regret, such was the want of candour in mankind, and such the disposition of the multitude to plunge into the infatuations of error, absurdity, and imposition, that in their own defence, they were obliged to wield the same weapons, which their adversaries had exercised against them with so much severity,

“ *Suo sibi gladio hunc jugulo.*”

Under these circumstances, they found the medical profession reduced, by a strange kind of base necessity, to a low illiberal trade, supported by mean finesse, chicanery, and collusion ; requiring rather the despicable arts of servility and cunning, than the happy genius and enlightened talents of a man of science.

Nor is this to be considered as the fabricated effusion of a warm imagination, but as actually and frequently asserted, by men of respectable age, practice, and ability.

Such have been the expressions of the Faculty, heightened perhaps by the aggravat-

ing colours of resentment, prejudice, and partiality.

Nor has the world been silent in answering or even anticipating these complaints, appealing to experience, and asserting that what they said was the voice of nature ; a voice, to which, with more malice than truth, they observed, their antagonists were much in the habit of turning a deaf ear.

By these steady advocates for mankind, the profession have had the tables turned on themselves, and have been boldly accused, of rapacity, want of candour, and even of common honesty. According to these declaimers, those who in the hour of sickness and affliction, have relied on them, have found in this mercenary tribe, for disinterested regard, an inordinate love of gold, and instead of friendly advice or gentle behaviour, loads of nauseating drugs and unintelligible jargon.

Consultations, for the forming of which neither expence or labour have been spared, and on the result of which the lives of the nearest and dearest in the most respectable families have depended, have been too often
devoted,

devoted, to idle discussions, uninteresting topics, vague hypotheses, and unmanly altercation.

Nor has the purpose of the meeting been at all attended to, until the plaintive voice of a bereft widow, or a miserable orphan, has driven the remorseless spoilers from the house of sorrow.

Neither have they forgot to observe, that in the prescription of medicines, the nature of the patient's complaint has been only a secondary object of consideration.

The opportunity in this case has been seized on as a happy one, to convince the apothecary how much the physician studies to be grateful, by promoting *trade*, and *loading in* medicines, as it has been emphatically called.

To these charges many others have been added, as caprice or resentment dictated; a distinct consideration of each of them, would be inconsistent with the limits of a short essay.

In this catalogue, we perhaps might find, a general over-rating of merit, and its consequence, demands proportionately exorbitant; a profligacy and relaxation of morals,

with a total inattention to the duties of religion.

The last article of the impeachment, I may be blamed for not wholly omitting, as it has been said, that in the present degenerate times *, it is too applicable to every rank of men, by those who are so much in the habit of indulging their talent, in declaiming against the peculiar tendency of the age they live in to moral turpitude.

But having frequently been in company with those, whose education, profession, and lives, ought to make them competent judges

* There generally have been, and probably always will be, declaimers, that think every age increases in vice and irreligion, "They can remember that things were very different when they were young."

As in the different ages of the world, the manners of its inhabitants must have depended on their degree of improvement and refinement, from the Cafrarian to the polished European ; it seems rational to conclude, that their moral defects have (*habita ratione partium*) been nearly equal in all countries and in all ages. And however frivolous and dissipated the present age may appear, it does not seem generally to exhibit crimes, of so black a cast, and so inimical to human nature, as those which stain the annals of two or three centuries ago.

of moral rectitude; and having heard respectable characters among them declare, that they thought the medical profession in its several branches, the most inattentive of any to religious duties, equally, if not more profligate and dissipated than all, I thought it my duty, as well as a respect and deference due to these gentlemen, and their holy office, to give it a place here.

Having been thus led by the nature of my subject, to consider the profession as it stands in its several relations to the world, it would not be wandering far from my purpose to review in a cursory way their treatment of each other.

But previous to such a discussion, it seems a necessary piece of justice, to vindicate, as far as is consistent with truth, the behaviour of practitioners from some aspersions, which have occurred in reviewing the conduct of both parties; and this is a task, which it should seem my duty, my interest, and my inclination to undertake.

I shall also endeavour to set in a clear point of view, some circumstances which have hitherto escaped observation.

These subjects, with some reflections and inferences

ferences which will naturally arise in treating of them, with an enquiry into some of the causes which have united in degrading the profession in the eyes of the world, and injuring their interests, will be taken up in the following pages.

And if in the course of this Essay, some disagreeable truths should arise, which appear to cast any oblique and invidious reflections on either side of the question, the trite but just observation, that there is no general rule without an exception, ought to be remembered.

From the nature of the present system it must happen, that in every extensive society of men, there will be a greater or less number of unworthy members of it.

But he who should be rash enough to assert, that, censuring the undeserving individuals, exposing their faults, and bestowing on their conduct its proper epithets, was aspersing the character, lowering the dignity, and laying the axe to the very root of the whole society, would be equally contemptible for his folly, his falsehood, and his absurdity.

Were a judicious critic to inveigh with

severity, against the nonsense, which the English press, like a mountain in labour, every day, nay every hour, groans with; justice, taste, and common sense, would readily acquiesce in the truth. But were he to deduce from this argument, any thing derogatory or unfavourable to the sublimity and classical elegance of a Gibbon, or the chaste imagination and poetical genius of an Hayley, his reasoning and abilities would meet with the ridicule, the contempt they so justly deserved,

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

A common-place Observation applied to Practitioners and their Patients.—The superior Advantages of a Physician compared to the Treatment of the lower Ranks of the Profession. — Dr. Rattcliffe's Advice to Dr. Mead.—Observations and Reflections on it.

THAT the impressions of a favour recently conferred, produce more immediate and lively symptoms of gratitude, than the remembrance of former acts of kindness however beneficial or important, is a fact which experience confirms, but honour disapproves.

A grateful heart, ardently pants to make a quick return for offices of benevolence, leaving prudence and reflection to pause and to delay.—For it frequently happens, that what in the moment of thankful rapture, was magnified as a God-like action, dwindles, in the long-extended perspective of time and policy, into a kindness, a duty, and a trifling favour.

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Did a due sense of the importance of obligations, equally diminish in the minds of those who confer and those who receive them, the mutual complaints of ungrateful and unreasonable tempers would not be so often heard.

But it happens unfortunately in the general intercourses of life, that the conferrer of a benefit heightens and overvalues it, in the same proportion, that the person obliged appreciates and lowers it.

From a consideration of these truths, which are deduced from a view of the conduct of mankind in *general*, we can easily account for the same motives operating still more powerfully, in the concerns of the medical profession in *particular*.—A profession which exists in relieving calamities, and lives by being rewarded for it.—The physician, it is true, has often the advantage of receiving his fee, accompanied with the most solemn protestations of respect and esteem, and attended with ten thousand indescribable circumstances that increase its value.

While the impressions of present pain, hope, and fear, are deep in the hearts of the patient and his friends; while the love of
money

money is repressed by increasing danger and anxiety, he is considered and received as an invaluable friend, as one on whom the happiness and tranquillity of the family depend; while medicine is considered as the last and only method of preserving a doubtful life.

In this case, the present is generally such as a generous mind is proud to bestow, and such as will not disgrace acknowledged merit to receive.

Happy intercourse, where gratitude and liberality increase the pleasure of doing good, and give a zest to that best of all efforts, an effort to bless !

But in branches of the profession, less honourable, less lucrative, but more fatiguing and laborious, the case is far otherwise : these unhappy men are seldom employed from any preference of opinion, but chiefly because their advice and assistance are procured at the cheapest rates, and not unfrequently, because they may be defrauded and imposed on with less difficulty, and less fear of detection and punishment.

It is a matter of ease, and often of triumph, to an illiberal mind, to find out some plausible pretence for disappointment, delay, or refusal :

refusal : nor indeed can it be denied, that the infamous returns of abuse and defamation, are cheap methods of discharging or rather evading a demand.

We may in some degree excuse the celebrated Dr. Rattcliffe*, for his unjustifiable advice to Dr. Mead, under the supposition that he was irritated by similar treatment, and provoked by ill usage.

An uncomplying kind of behaviour, such as Rattcliffe's, bordering on cruelty, would be unsufferable in a man of less eminence, but would be highly culpable in any one.

His peculiarities, though accompanied by sterling merit, and many good qualities, can only be accounted for and palliated, by his constitutional asperity, and an independent spirit, called forth perhaps by the slavish and unmanly submission, or the injurious treatment of his predecessors or cotemporaries,

* Mead, you are just entering into practice ; it will not perhaps be long before I shall leave it, and I ought to be some judge of the treatment, men in our line have to expect from mankind : use the world ill, or by — they will use you so.

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and heightened at last by the petulancy of old age.

His liberal donations to Oxford, and the essential services he rendered to medicine, will be remembered and revered, when his foibles and his singularities are buried in oblivion.

The subaltern practitioner must attain or assume more philosophy, or he must not eat : he must learn to submit with patience to the insults and injuries, which the lower orders of his profession are daily exposed to.

And if he does not receive a considerable gratification from the exercise of a benevolent disposition, independent of the profits of his practice, he may look with envy on the preferable condition of a hewer of wood, or a drawer of water.

The dexterity requisite for effecting a *good day's work*, and the plausible exhibition of innocent no-meaning trifles in all cases, certainly requires no great exertion of the mind in investigating the complaints of a patient, and may be termed an easy way of *doing business*.

But such a conduct, how well soever it may answer the present purposes of profit,
will

will afford no satisfaction in the retired moments of unbiassed reflection : when a man shall find that he has lost many opportunities of producing some essential advantage, or removing some threatening evil.

His negative treatment of the patient, and his interested activity with regard to himself, is a contrast which must effectually damn him in his own mind, and in the eyes of the world.

To assert that unworthy and infamous characters are never to be met with in the profession, or to affirm that they never experience ungenerous and cruel treatment, would be assigning them an enviable lot inconsistent with the present state of things.

To suppose that a few shillings, or a few pounds, are a full and adequate return to a practitioner, for being instrumental in saving a life or a limb, and to imagine that all idea of the obligation is cancelled and obliterated by a fee, is a mode of reasoning never the less false for its being frequent.

The loss of rest, the weight on the spirits, and the daily risque of reputation, to which the practice of the several branches of medicine exposes men, may be rendered supportable, by the good offices, the candour, and the friendship of a recovered patient.

But the fee of insulting pride, given without delicacy, shall be accepted without
C emotion,

emotion, while the poor man's mite, moistened with the tear of gratitude, shall be received with delight.

Whenever the unenlightened idol of ostentation, shall give pain by his manner of conferring a favour, it is the duty of every member of the Faculty to vindicate the dignity of man, as well as the honour of his profession, by supporting this position with decency and firmness—

A practitioner's love of money may be gratified by an exorbitant present ; but he can only receive his deserts, by being treated with the candour, delicacy, and attention, of a friend, a benefactor, and an equal.

The whiffling apothecary may employ his subordinate bows and abject deportment, from the drawing-room to the butler's pantry, with the self-satisfaction and grimace of a monkey ; but he may rest assured, that with whatever countenance or language he is received, his meanness and unmanly behaviour, cannot fail exciting inward contempt and abhorrence.

After he has been made use of as a tool to execute some base and ignominious purpose, he will be deservedly kicked out of door, like that domestic animal whose fawning tricks and despicable gestures, he so closely and so happily imitates.

CHAPTER THE THIRD.

A Prejudice against the Art of Healing considered.—Has Medicine upon the whole been most useful or most prejudicial to Mankind.—The Folly of too great a Reliance on it.—The Mischief of having no Opinion of its Use.—The Pleasures and the Inconveniencies of Ignorance. — A Reflection. — Some Instances of Credulity spoken of.—A few Hints on modern Improvements.—It is much easier to contract than to cure a Disease.—A Comparison.

“**G**OD never made his works for man to mend,” has been the echo of popular clamour, and the burthen of the poet’s song.

The proposition may appear specious, the verse harmonious, and some arguments offered in favour of it may seem convincing; but should the votary of the Muses, be so unfortunate as to labour under a putrid fever, or to have a rupture of an arterial branch, his conduct on either of these occasions, though it might not immediately overset the assertion, would at once give the lie to his faith and his professions.

Nevertheless, many have still hesitated in pronouncing whether Medicine, under the many disadvantages it labours, has been beneficial or injurious to mankind*.

That it is like the manna showered down from heaven upon the favoured but ungrateful descendants of Jacob, and meant as a blessing, but converted by their folly and perverseness, to a most bitter and inveterate curse, is in many respects a faithful representation.

The credulous valetudinarian, who *tremblingly alive all over*, sinks under his delicate nerves and exquisite sensibility, and allots to each hour of the day, its draught and its pill, without regard either to diet or exercise, is an object of ridicule and pity.

If he expects to remove his disorders without attending to, and guarding against the causes which united in producing them, he will find himself mistaken, and still worse, when it is too late.

* “ You see two men whom they are burying ; they
 “ are two brothers, that were both sick of the same dis-
 “ ease, but took different measures ; one of them relied
 “ with an entire confidence on his physician ; the other
 “ let nature take her course ; yet they are both dead, the
 “ former from taking all the physic the doctor ordered,
 “ and the latter because he would take nothing.”

Le Diable Boiteux, chap. 3d.

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The medical sceptic, who would lie panting and burning under the fell attacks of a pleurisy, without having recourse to the *delusive chimeras of art*, as he terms them, would suffer martyrdom for his criminal infatuation.

His too credulous neighbour might be conducted with him to the cells of a mad-house, with the same propriety that we should fetter the devoted suicide raving for the dagger or the bowl.

The illiterate peasant, enveloped in the shades of ignorance and innocence, who considers Medicine as a never-failing resource, on which he may with confidence rely in the hour of affliction, as a certain remover of every pain and every disease, may be considered as happy in the harmless delusion, which so effectually quiets his fears and his apprehensions.

He may be commended as a supporter of the credit of the Faculty, and as an excellent patient; but is in many respects equally if not more injurious to the cause of enlightened science, than he who has no faith in Medicine at all.

It were rather to be wished, that the fabric should sink, than totter under the weak and ignominious pillars of ignorance and imposition.

A candid patient (thank Heaven such there

are) well informed of what Medicine can, and what it cannot do, will be as far from a superstitious confidence in its favour, as he is from illiberal and ill-grounded prejudices against it *.

Ever ready to make proper allowances for ill success, he will not form unreasonable expectations.

Qualified to judge of what may and what ought to be done, he will readily detect, and justly condemn an ignorant or unprincipled practitioner.

The patient of an opposite description, will be led into error, absurdity, and unavailing disappointment.

He would hear with astonishment, and be convinced with reluctance, that there is no composition in his much-loved dispensary that can cure an hydrocephalon.

He would look with a mixture of pity and contempt on that art, which is frequently obliged to have recourse to amputation, in

* On this principle I cannot but readily agree with those who consider several late publications as serviceable to liberal practitioners, though they have been strongly condemned by some, under the idea that it was imparting too much knowledge to the world.

“ Excessit Medicina Modum.”

diseases, where his invaluable compounds and his infallible remedies have been ineffectually applied.

When the principles of Medicine, and the laws of the animal œconomy, have been explained to him ; when the phænomena of those laws, and the uncertainty of the best of remedies, have been pointed out to him,

———— Pol me occidistis, amici,
Non servastis, ait, cui sic extorta voluptas,
Et demptus per vim, mentis gratissimus error.

he perhaps would confess with a sigh, that an increase of knowledge had only produced an augmentation of sorrow.

After all that has been said, it cannot be denied, that this art in able and honest hands is highly beneficial and necessary in the frail and imperfect condition of man, exposed as he is, to internal disease, and external accident.

Like a self-evident proposition, it requires not a proof ; to deny it, would be disavowing the efficacy of the Peruvian bark in shortening the paroxysm of an intermittent, or the specific power of mercury in curing the lues venerea.

The Pharmacopœiæ of antient, and some of

modern times, afford remarkable instances of credulity or dishonesty.

The sagacious surgeon, who with gravity and unaffected assurance, would order the weapon with which a wound had been inflicted, to be rubbed with his mystical sympathetic powder, was possessed of at least a harmless secret : provided it was not enjoined that stimulating applications were to be used to the part, and as long as it did not prevent his paying a due attention to the state of the wound.

We may be allowed to smile at the recital, but some modern ideas of curing ulcers on the leg, however various their cause, by large doses of nitre, without rest or attending to peculiarities of constitution, do not fall much short of it in absurdity.

Nor are those less paradoxical, which suppose it possible for an ointment, without internal medicines, to cure a sore, in spite of the most vitiated habit of body.

I have given nitre in long-repeated and large doses, without any benefit to an ulcer, but with evident ill effects on the general health.

And it is hardly necessary to observe, that the best-contrived applications, will neither produce advantage to the patient, or credit to
the

the surgeon, without attending to regimen, and medicines capable of correcting a bad state of the blood.

Rest, a light moderate diet, with gentle alteratives, and above all the Peruvian bark, are what I have found of the utmost service in the few years I have lived.

And indeed that most excellent medicine, the bark, with the mere superficial application of dry lint, and keeping the parts clean, with proper bandages, has procured me a credit in some cases, when I neither expected or deserved it.

A Scultetus, or even a Heister, would probably allow but little merit to the present practice of surgery, which confides so little in art, and leaves so much to nature; they would lament to see their powders, their plaisters, and ointments, mouldering into neglect, and giving place to the simplest, the mildest, and the most inartificial of all applications.

The root of Contrayerva, for which England is indebted to Sir Francis Drake, and declared by some to have added as great a lustre to his name as his naval expeditions, seems at present to be deservedly in its decline.

A long and pompous train of restoratives, alexipharmicks, and cordials, the terror of the
sick,

sick, and the Pæctolean* mystery of physick, have been happily succeeded by the solid and unequivocal advantages of the Peruvian bark.

Nor has the *Confectio Cardiaca*, of long-revered name and memory, been able to support its reputation, with those who have found every desirable effect, from the preferable and exhilarating qualities of a glass of generous wine.

To expect that a draught or a pill in a few hours, or even in a few days, should be able entirely to remove a disease which has been produced by the indolence, the irregularities, and the excesses of half a man's life, is a vain and idle supposition.

The avenues which lead to disease are various and seducing, embellished by the refinements of art and imagination.

The charms of social intercourse, the luxuries of the table, and the gentle but irresistible impulse of love, are daily tempting us to that precipice, from which human resolution is so often dashed down, to the ruin of our health, our fortune, and our peace.

* *Cujus votis non suffecerat arum*

Quod Tagus et rutila volvit Pæctolus arena.

JUVENAL.

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The difficulties which present themselves to the practitioner are increased, and his success rendered precarious, in the same proportion that we are tempted to exceed the simple, the moderate, and the innocent demands of nature.

The rank debauch of a night, the intoxicating pleasures of the bowl, and the dull city feast, distinguished by disgusting profusion, gross appetite, and brutal gratification, are capable of producing complaints, sufficient to perplex the most consummate medical knowledge.

The tedious but necessary regulations of diet and regimen, without which so little can be done in Medicine, are worse than death to the voluptuous glutton, whose life and conversation clearly evince that he lives but to eat.

He pathetically deplores the decay of his appetite, which already obliges him to have recourse to the most exquisite refinements of modern cookery, before he is enabled to make a tolerable repast.

Under such mortifying circumstances, must he, or can he resign, the complicated richness of his soups, the stimulating poignancy of his sauces, and the elegant variety of his dishes?

He views with envy the robust constitution,
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the keen appetite, and the refreshing repose of the hardy peasant ; but considers with horror and pity, his daily labour, his homely diet, and his temperate enjoyments.

His delicacy is shocked, when he compares these with his own habits of life, which consist of eating without hunger, drinking without thirst, and seeking in vain for refreshing sleep, on his bed of down, without fatigue : his greatest exertion a morning visit, and his chief exercise the artificial motion of a sedan.

Enervated by inactivity, listless through satiety, yet provoked by licentious spectacles, and stimulating food, to unnatural and excessive debauch, we ought not to be surprized at the debilitated bodies, the uncultivated minds, the vicious inclinations, and the puny race of the infatuated sons of dissipation.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

Some Considerations on the Propriety of informing the Sick when they are in a dangerous Situation.—A State of Anxiety or Despair unfavourable towards Recovery.—In these Cases the Task of the Clergy not so irksome as that of the Physician.—Modern Credulity.—The Persian's Opinion.

THE arts of delusion so frequently, so systematically, and after all so ineffectually practised by the serious and the gay, to stifle the voice of conscience and reflection in their passage through life, have been by some thought necessary, and by others condemned as unjustifiable in a state of sickness.

In this case the necessity for plain truth, and for acquainting a man with the degree of danger he is in, has been emphatically insisted on, for reasons of a spiritual as well as a temporal nature.

Whether that repentance which is so naturally produced by the approaches of dissolution, is a rational ground for hope of future mercy; and whether it is expedient, or even necessary, to fill the mind with apprehensions
and

and fears, under a state of disease, where an uneasy mind is incompatible with recovery, and where the efficacy of the point in question is denied by many, and a matter of doubt with all; are subjects which it is neither my business or inclination to discuss.

I can only lament our fatal negligence, in thus postponing so necessary a work, that in the midst of the blessings we enjoy, we should forget from whence they spring, and defer that to old age, and sickness, which ought to be the chief business and pleasure of life in the days of health and vigour.

If we are either inclined or permitted to listen to the voice of nature or reason, we may perhaps, without giving offence, be induced to conclude, that ringing the alarum of everlasting torments, and an angry Deity, in the deaf ear of a miserable wretch, whose mental and corporal faculties, are deranged and distracted by the agonies of pain, has no advantages which can compensate for the real evils of despair and relapse, so frequently and so naturally produced by such a conduct.

Nor can I dismiss this subject, which I may be blamed for having enlarged upon too much, as foreign to my purpose, without suggesting, that we are authorized in drawing a source of comfort from the mercy, as well as of terror
and

and dismay, from the inexorable justice of a wise but compassionate Creator of the universe.

The moralist and divine, may declaim with studied eloquence on the superior charms of virtue, may call in truth to assert the solid advantages of morality, and may charitably strive to soften the rigour of divine vengeance by the solacing tears of pity and condolence.

After this, his work is done; he retires to enjoy with complacency, the respectful attentions, the domestic pleasures, and the gentle inactivity of an ecclesiastical life.

But when the ruinous career of riot and debauch is finished, it becomes the melancholy task of the physician, to *see* the ghastly devastation, and to *feel* his inability to repair it.

He beholds the ineffectual struggles of nature and art, closes the haggard eyes of wan despair, and at last is obliged to submit with silence, to the reproach, of not being a worker of miracles rather than a rational practitioner.

The pleasing fables of antient allegory, enriched with classical, and adorned with poetical elegance, which describe with such beauty a perpetuity of days, and the renewing old age with youthful vigour, however they may excel in poetry and stile, fall vastly short of
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the miraculous relations * and undoubted promises, so confidently held forth, and so devoutly believed, in the days of modern empiricism and irrational credulity.

Nor ought we to condemn the declaration of the honest Persian, that none could possibly suffer themselves to die in England, but the avaricious, the poor, and the senseless, whilst health and length of days were daily exposed to sale.

Such is the severe but just picture of an age, which lays claim to acknowledged improvement and perfection, in the solid comforts, as well as the elegant superfluities of life.

* “ Madam, if you were less lavish of your implicit
“ faith to the quack, and would reserve a small share of
“ it for your poor confessor, it would be an essential step
“ towards the salvation of your soul, and I flatter myself
“ would be no ways injurious to the health of your
“ body.”

Such was the well-meant but ineffectual advice of a venerable father, almost two centuries ago, to a lady, who, though her conscience hesitated at the doctrine of the Wafer, yet she was a dupe to every idle impostor.—Whether it is at all applicable to *Protestant* freethinkers, is not our business to determine.

CHAPTER THE FIFTH.

The Causes which injure and degrade Medicine mentioned.—A superfluous Number of Practitioners—Their Dissentions among themselves.—A Penchant for Apprentice Fees.—A supposed Defect in the Mode of Education.—Young Men too much their own Masters—The ill Effects of it.—Poverty.—Disinclination and Inability.—Exorbitant Profits.—Reflections.

WITHOUT aiming at, or pretending to that perfectly disinterested character, which has been so often assumed, so generally praised, but has so seldom existed, I shall consider it as the business of every one who treats of the medical profession, to enquire into some of the real and supposed causes, which have united in degrading it in the eyes of the world.

The first and principal one, from which many of the rest originate, is the great and superfluous number of members of the Faculty.

The facetious Sir Samuel Garth (whose pen dealt in much pleasanter lines than prescriptions) doubted even in his days, whether in

London, doctors or patients were most numerous during the summer season.

Nor have modern wits been wanting, who assert, that mankind would suffer no diminution in number, if the former were less numerous than they now are.

From this cause may be deduced, that general, and often that dishonourable avidity for business, which stoops to any meanness to attain it, and defective, through ignorance or indolence, of real merit, disdains not to call in the unmanly aid, of adulation, detraction, and foul-mouthed abuse.

Nor is there in life a pursuit, which more peculiarly exposes a man to the malicious shafts of an inveterate opponent or an invidious world.

The illiberal prejudice of a nurse, the whim of a child, or the caprice of an unreasonable patient, are often able to prevail against the abilities, experience, and integrity of the most established practitioner.

But the candidate for practice should remember, that the same ears which listen so attentively to the tale of calumny against his rival, will with the same readiness, and the same uncharitable spirit, be expanded, to receive any scandalous reports, which may hereafter be propagated against himself.

Let him be slow to condemn, and let him be deaf to whispers against his adversaries ; he may otherwise expect a similar treatment, whenever a competitor shall occur, as meanly disposed as himself, and endued with superior cunning and versatility. There is no line of life which renders it more necessary to observe Horace's advice ;

“ *Quid de quoque viro et cui dicas sæpe videto.*”

The assassin who gives the deadly blow, concealed in the shades of night, shall in his turn be stabbed in the dark, without a hand to heal, or a heart to sympathize with his sorrows.

To enter into a minute detail of the frequent and frivolous animosities in the several branches of the profession, would be descending to a useless and uninteresting task ; we may however conclude, that their disagreements, and attempts to counteract and undermine each other, will not fail affording the world opportunities to take unfair advantages of them. The interests and (if we may be allowed the expression) the honour of physic have on these occasions been too often sacrificed to selfishness and revenge, the most infernal, but the most seducing of all our crimes.

Nor ought the dishonest conduct of those men to be mentioned without the severest cen-

ture, who, for the sordid consideration of an apprentice-fee, undertake to educate and instruct in the second orders of the profession, an unnecessary number of young men, when they are at the same time conscious that their practice, abilities, and application, are totally inadequate to it.

The conveniency of being frequently supplied with a handsome sum of money, no one will deny; but to convert a friend's son, liberally educated, to a drudge and a menial servant, to leave him without a guide in his hours of business and leisure, to dismiss him ignorant and uninformed in that which is to be the support of his future life, are circumstances which must wring the heart of every parent, and cannot fail extorting from them the bitterest curses on the detestable author of their calamities.

Against such men, and their abandoned traffic, let every parent and every friend provide, by previous caution and enquiry.

A want of liberal establishments for the purpose of education in London, and an abuse of the present unsystematic mode, have been spoken of as injurious to the cause of medicine.

While Scotland, without a third part of the opportunities for improvement which London possesses, is copiously furnished with foundations

tions and endowments, for the advancement of professional learning, the metropolis of England is without a college or professorship, adequate to the purpose of improving by theory and physiology its superior practical advantages. Gratitude and truth declare that the gentlemen who preside over the several branches they teach there, treat the subjects they discuss, with honour and emolument to themselves, with instruction and pleasure to their hearers.

But as long as we are deprived of the solid and permanent advantages of an academic system of education, and the minds of young men are left undirected in their studies and pursuits, while their time is so much at their own disposal, we must expect every evil, from unprofitable application, time mis-spent, or talents uncultivated.

A young man enjoying with rapture that liberty, which he has long and ardently panted after, stands in need of every motive, and every possible inducement, to attract his industry, fix his attention, and guard him against the bewitching allurements of vice and dissipation, which every where surround and invite him.

A happy taste in the disposition of a side-curl, the important choice of a coat of many colours, and a daily visit to the theatres and other places of resort, may be decent, and perhaps necessary to compleat the gentleman.

But dress and accomplishments, however splendid and striking, only serve to set professional defects in a more glaring point of view.

To make that the employment of life, which, if allowable, should only serve to relax the fatigues of intense application; to neglect to qualify ourselves for the practice of a profession, which enables us to improve our fortunes, and gives a scope to our disposition for blessing mankind (however light we may make of it) is adding fraud and inhumanity to the crimes which already undo us.

When we have, by culpable ignorance, murdered or dismembered an unhappy wretch, it will be adding insult to injury, to tell his weeping friends, that we could criticise with judgment on the drama, that we were allowed to sing a good song, or that we were noted for leaping over five-barred gates.

The time and talents so frequently and so ruinously prostituted on these acquirements, which of themselves, and at proper intervals, are innocent, might have rendered us happy in ourselves, and useful to mankind: but in this case are only instrumental in making us murderers and cheats.

Without meaning in the most distant manner, to insult an honourable state of poverty, which in a million of instances has been found
the

the laudable spur to great and good actions, we may be permitted to wish that parents in general would not be so eager to educate their sons in this pursuit, unless their circumstances enable them, to make some decent provision for their support, in the early years of their establishment, when their want of acquaintance and experience may be presumed to be a probable impediment to an immediate and profitable practice.

Were they conscious of the peculiar set of pains, which a poor practitioner agonizes under, or of the difficulties to which he is exposed by being obliged to support some appearance with a less than scanty income, they would prefer the solid comforts of a mechanic's life, to the genteel embarrassments of a medical one.

The accidental circumstances which (to use a hazardous expression) throw men into this profession, have frequently been owing to the inclination, the pride, and the folly of parents : it is hardly credible, that much attention is ever paid to the capricious starts, of an unsteady puerile mind, which not unfrequently has a foolish fondness for some particular occupation for the very reason that mature judgment would condemn it.

A family connection, a situation to appear-

ance desirable, and an unforeseen event, have often deposited a man, in a line of life, utterly incompatible with his ability, his inclination, and his fortune.

With a mind soured by disappointments, unable to practise either with credit or self-satisfaction, we ought not to be surprized at, however we may regret, his adopting dishonourable practices, which nothing but the iron hand of necessity would ever have compelled him to submit to.

The irreligion and profligacy of practitioners, have also been supposed, to injure the credit of the Faculty.

Without again pointing out the injustice and absurdity, of condemning a whole society, for the faults of some members of it, we may perhaps trace this scandal to its source.

The accidents and calamities to which the frail state of man is exposed, frequently demand attendance on those days * set apart for the

* I have lately seen a hint, published, I believe, in the work of a Divine, for remedying this evil, by charging nothing for attendance on that day; the idea is a good one, but the remedy would increase the disease, as the *day of rest* would probably be the most fatiguing one in the week. It brings to my mind, without meaning to offend this charitable gentleman, what I have seen or heard

the necessary purposes of worship and devotion: and the uncharitable part of mankind, will often assert, that the absenting ourselves from the public services of religion, which is sometimes the consequence of necessity, gradually degenerates into habit and matter of choice.

But those who censure with so much severity this supposed enormity, should remember, that it is not more criminal to be employed on a Sunday, in the service of the helpless, though not immediately necessary, than to return, after the most pious ejaculations and devout deportment, to spend the remainder of the day in scandal, insipidity, and cabal. It cannot be denied that a very considerable practice may be carried on without interfering with religious duties; as it becomes every man to postpone his engagements to the next day, except in cases of life or limb, which cannot dispense with immediate or regular attendance. And indeed, however exalted our station, and however valued we may be as professional men, it requires no deep reasoning to prove, that we do

heard of a philosophic character: "I never knew a man
 " bear the misfortunes of others with greater calmness
 " and composure."

not add any lustre to our character, by openly ridiculing religion, morality, or common decency.

The furious whirlwind of passion may sometimes force us beyond these barriers, but we find that in deserting them we abandon our peace.

We cannot but readily join with those who conceive a shocking idea, of a physician and an anatomist void of a spirit of religion ; he who could behold the inimitable structure, the variety of parts, and the complex mechanism of our frame, without humbly adoring the almighty Creator : and he who sees in his daily rounds, the devastation, the agonies, and the worse than deaths, produced by excess and criminal indulgence, without emotion and influence, must have a weak head, and an abandoned heart.

The exorbitant profits in the practice of medicine, have been often exclaimed against, and as often exaggerated. Those who coolly profess that they should be satisfied with the moderate profit of five per cent. in mercantile and other occupations, forget that such a profit, which, in their vast returns, produces affluence and ease, would not afford the practitioner the bare necessities of life.

But while we pronounce it every man's duty, to procure a decent subsistence, and to
prepare

prepare a resource for sickness and old age; we would not be understood to defend the iniquitous conduct of those, who drain the purses of the sick, the infirm, and the unfortunate, to indulge an affected taste for inconsistent splendor, profligacy, and dissipation.

Nor can it be expected that patients will tamely submit to fraud and imposition, when a man has impoverished himself by an inglorious taste for painting and virtù, or when his pocket has been emptied by the boundless extravagance of a rapacious whore.

It may not be amiss to observe, that if mankind expect medical attendance in all the pomp of equipage, they should not scruple paying for its support. The vivifying and cordial-effects of an elegant chariot, and the specific qualities of a footman in livery, agreeably gild the pill, and happily disguise or relieve the awkward circumstances of illness.

CHAPTER THE SIXTH.

Conclusion.—Is real Merit the sure Road to Eminence?—Are any other Qualifications necessary?—An Example or two.—Reflections on them.—A Piece of Advice to fortunate Candidates.

AN humble but impartial enquiry into the most probable methods of attaining superior fame and emolument, seems a necessary but delicate part, of an Essay on the Manners of the Faculty.

To blindly coincide with vulgar and irrational prejudices, might be considered as sacrificing truth to timidity and caution. And a free discussion of subjects, which seem to affect great characters, might appear envious and dishonourable.

We would wish to ask, but with proper submission, the following question. Are great abilities, and unwearied application, the unerring guides to preferment?

If after properly considering the subject, it should be answered, that they most certainly are, it might appear conceited and arrogant in an obscure individual to differ from a general opinion.

It would be rather his duty and interest, to concur with the fashionable doctrine, and to declare, with equal pleasure and truth, that among his acquaintance, gentlemen in the several branches of the profession, had acquired that honour and affluence, which their abilities and virtues were justly entitled to.

But as there always exist some unfashionable mortals, who will not be so ready to take things for granted without examining them; who *dare to doubt*, and to dissent from this or any generally-received opinion; impartiality obliges us to propose a second question.

Are not success, connection, superficial accomplishments, and political deception, the necessary steps to a profitable and extensive practice?

If it be true that real merit is the sure road to *preferment*, and that lucky incidents avail nothing, how can we account for talents, that would have shone with splendor in the meridian of a metropolis, languishing,

“ Alive unnoticed, and when dead forgot ?”

A fortuitous train of circumstances, that in one instance would have buried a Hunter in obscurity, in another might have raised the favourite child of fortune, without genius,
without

without effort, and perhaps without a wish, to reputation and affluence.

If on the other hand, it should be said, that accidental success, family connection, and political deception, are not necessary for these attainments; how happens it, that the rise and progress of those should be so rapid, who are particularly distinguished for these qualifications, but are notoriously deficient in that knowledge, which is necessary for the skilful practice of their profession?

“ Quo spectanda modo, quo sensu credis et ore ? ”

A person, whose name I forget, was disgracefully rejected at a public examination, where he exhibited shameful proofs of ignorance and inability; yet a minister, as much beloved by his sovereign as detested by the people, gave him an appointment, from which a great and good man * was dismissed, who would have reflected honour on any country and in any age.

The present day would, perhaps, afford us some similar instances, in which a noble alliance, an abject behaviour, private services, and a predilection which could not be resisted, have been able to obliterate the remembrance of the most sacred promises and meritorious actions.

* Dr. Francis Nicholls.

From what has been said, and the general fate of practitioners, it seems highly probable, that the greatest and best-cultivated talents, unassisted by connection, success, and political manœuvre, will not be sufficient to gain distinguished fame and emolument.

But if a young man with a decent person and address, is so happy as to unite, genius, application, and prudence, with an extensive acquaintance, and the golden art of rendering himself agreeable and necessary to the great, affluence and dignity are almost his certain lot.

Should some lucky event take place, so as to render him the object of public attention and general conversation, should his eclat be such as

“ *Digito monstrari et dicier hic est.* ”

his success is beyond a doubt.

He may then look forward with ecstasy on the fruits of his toil; and after a twenty years pursuit of profit, pleasure, and respect, he may honourably retire, with a fortune adequate to his wishes, to enjoy by turns his town and country house, and the sweet society of a select circle of friends.

When arrived at the summit of his hopes, his behaviour will be moderate and unassuming;

ing; he will remember the difficulties he himself encountered when struggling into life.

Without putting on the strange reserve, affected hurry, and insulting haughtiness of some unworthy upstarts, he will prove that he is equal to the situation he enjoys, and treat the pupils and students that surround him with friendship, tenderness, and respect.

F I N I S.

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The SECOND EDITION of

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